

Name	Francis Harritable's log buildings (ruins)	Reference in 1998 Marong Study	S05
Address	3a Rothackers Road (accessed from Fitzpatrick's Road), near Sebastian	Map reference	VicRoads 44 D3
Building type	Former stores and dwelling	Survey date	June and August 2010
Date of construction	c.1860s-70s (stores); c. 1890s (dwelling)	Recommendation	Include in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay
Significance	The log structures (ruins) are of local historical and technological significance.		



July 1994 – Left: East end of eastern store. Right: View of the two stores from the north (Source: Andrew Ward, courtesy of City of Greater Bendigo).



June 2010 – Left: View of site from Rothackers Road (west). Right: The eastern store, viewed from the south-west.



June 2010 – Left: Raised floor and remnant mud and brick pugging to the eastern store. Right: View of site from north-west, with the former dwelling at left.



Left: Aerial view, 2010, with the stores and stables circled (Source: City of Greater Bendigo). Right: Proposed Heritage Overlay map, with the subject site shown as S05. Note, the extent of the overlay is indicative.

Intactness Good Fair ✓ Poor

History

Francis (Frank) Harritable (1820-1916) was a Spanish seaman who arrived in Melbourne in 1858.¹ Harritable followed the diggings, travelling to McIvor (Heathcote)² before arriving at Sebastian by 1864. In September of that year, local landholder Hugh Glass granted Messrs Charlton and Co – comprising Robert Charlton, Francis Harritable, Hart and Price – consent to erect a 12-head crushing plant at the Frederick the Great Mine in Sebastian.³ Harritable later became a director of the mine, which finally closed in the 1930s, by which time it had yielded over 170,000 ounces of gold.⁴

In 1865, Harritable married Alice Ann (1845-1919), at which time Sebastian was described as a ‘tiny hamlet ... nearly deserted’.⁵ The first of the Harritable’s many children, David, was born in 1867.⁶ In 1873, Harritable acquired 14ha (35 acres) south of the Frederick the Great Mine, on the present Rothackers Road, a short distance west of Myers Creek. He subsequently purchased the adjacent 55ha (136 acre) block and land in nearby Campbell’s Forest. In 1879-80 he built the White Horse Hotel at Sebastian (now the Little Sebastian). Aside from the Frederick the Great Mine, at which mining had temporarily ceased, local industry at the time included a saw mill, located ‘two miles from the township’.⁷

The Harritable property on Rothackers Road, oriented north-south parallel with the road, comprised a house (demolished) and two stores built of logs.⁸ A later log building, to the east of the stores, is believed to have been built as a dwelling for Robert Harritable (born 1878).⁹ Following their father’s death, the Harritable sons continued to work the land. They were mixed farmers, growing grain, mainly wheat and some oats and raising sheep for meat and wool production.¹⁰

Victoria’s Framework of Historical Themes

Victoria’s themes and sub-themes:

- 2.4: Arriving in a new land
- 2.5: Migrating and making a home
- 4.1: Living off the land
- 4.3: Grazing and raising livestock
- 4.5: Gold mining
- 4.6: Exploiting other mineral, forest and water resources
- 5.8: Working
- 6.8: Living on the fringes

Description & Integrity

The surviving structures at the Harritable property are two log stores and a log dwelling. All are built of Cypress Pine and in a ruinous condition. The broader complex previously included a dwelling (demolished), dam (extant), an earth closet with facilities for adults and children (the location is indicated by a bramble thicket to the north of the timber stores) and brick pathways.

The stores are gable roofed log structures, built of un-split logs laid horizontally, with the corners formed by notches cut out of the ends. The eastern store retains part of its sawn timber roof frame and some gable end weatherboards at its eastern end. Corrugated sheet metal, the former roofing material, is located around the base of the buildings. The gaps between the logs are pugged internally with mud and brick fragments – some pugging survives. The logs to the north sides of the stores, facing the former farmhouse, are sawn to give more of a refined finish. To the south side, the logs are rough (unsawn). The western store has a wide ground level opening to the north and an upper level opening to the east. There is evidence that the store originally had a raised timber floor. The eastern store has a raised timber floor with two doors, one to the lower level (north) and the other to the upper level (east). The floor is carried on stumps and joists, oriented north-south. A semi circular gutter bracket is located to the south wall. When the site was inspected in the 1990s, the two stores were connected by a sawn timber framed link section (no longer extant). The smaller structure to the east of the site, believed to have been built as a dwelling by Robert Harritable (see 'History') is approximately square in plan, and in an advanced state of decay. A low doorway is to the west wall.

Aside from the timber stores and dwelling, evidence of early settlement at the site includes a riveted iron tank, the post of a former post and rail fence, brick paths and mature trees.

Comparative Analysis

In the early years of European settlement, log construction was the preferred method of building police lock-ups in Victoria. In situations where brick or stone were not readily available, it was a means of constructing secure buildings. Surviving Victorian log lock-ups include an example at nearby Eaglehawk. Miles Lewis, Professor in the Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning at the University of Melbourne, suggests that the use of log construction by the police was a factor in log buildings gaining some currency on the goldfields.¹¹ A number of log-built diggers' huts are recorded at the Bendigo goldfields in 1852. A contemporary description records the structures as, '... built of solid trunks of trees laid horizontally ... The logs are notched at the corners, and the interstices daubed with clay ... The roofs of these are almost flat, covered with sheets of bark, with logs on the bark to keep it down'.¹² With exception of the flat roof, the subject buildings generally conform to this description. Other recorded log cabins in the area include an example built by William Sinclair at the junction of Derwent and Long gullies in 1854¹³ and another at Neilborough East, built by brothers Harry and John Mountjoy (undated).¹⁴ Professor Lewis notes that log construction became more common after 1870, following the land selection Acts which forced settlers into heavily forested land. The requirement to clear sites of trees and vegetation for habitation and cultivation was a factor in the increasing use of timber as a construction material from this time.¹⁵

Extant examples of log constructions in the Bendigo region include a former food store at *Viewbank* in Summerfield and the Eaglehawk lock-up. The former food store at *Viewbank* is a comparatively crude construction, utilising logs of massive dimensions; it is also in a ruinous state. The lock-up is of comparatively refined construction and survives in good condition.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

The log structures (ruins) at Francis Harritable's property south of Sebastian are of historical significance. The two stores are presumed to have been constructed in the 1860s-70s by Spaniard Francis Harritable, an early settler in Sebastian who invested in the successful Frederick the Great Mine. Harritable acquired extensive land in the region, and also constructed the present Little Sebastian Hotel. The smaller log construction to the east of the site is believed to have been built as a dwelling by Harritable's son, Robert, and possibly dates to the 1890s. The Harritables were associated with the site for at least two generations from the 1860s to the early twentieth century. The structures also help demonstrate an approach to building on isolated farms, making use of available materials and vernacular construction.

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

The log structures (ruins), albeit in a depleted state, are comparatively rare surviving log buildings in the Bendigo goldfields region. Log construction is believed to have been relatively common in the goldfields from the 1850s, although few are known to survive. Known examples include the Eaglehawk lock-up and the former food store at *Viewbank*, Summerfield.

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

N/A

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

N/A

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics in the context of the municipality.

N/A

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

The log structures (ruins) at Francis Harritable's property south of Sebastian are of technological significance for demonstrating an approach to the use of a locally available resource (timber) in the construction of vernacular dwellings for storage and human habitation, in this case in the 1860s-70s (stores) and 1890s (dwelling). The surviving internal pugging, with mud and brick fragments, enhances the technological value of the structures.

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of the place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

N/A

Criterion H: Special association with life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Greater Bendigo's history.

The association of the log ruins with Francis Harritable is additionally of note. Harritable, a Spanish immigrant, was a prominent member of the local community. He oversaw the construction of the Little Sebastian Hotel (S01) and was also a member of the consortium which established the Fredrick the Great mine in 1864.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The surviving structures at the Harritable property are two log stores and a log dwelling. All are built of Cypress Pine. The stores are gable roofed log structures, built of un-split logs laid horizontally, with the corners formed by notches cut out of the ends. The eastern store retains part of its sawn timber roof frame and some gable end weatherboards at its eastern end. The gaps between the logs are pugged internally with mud and brick fragments – some pugging survives. The western store has a wide ground level opening to the north and an upper level opening to the east. There is evidence that the store originally had a raised timber floor. The eastern store has a raised timber floor with two doors, one to the lower level (north) and the other to the upper level (east). The smaller structure to the east of the site is believed to have been built as a dwelling. It is approximately square in plan, and in an advanced state of decay.

How is it significant?

The log structures (ruins) at Francis Harritable's property south of Sebastian are of local historical and technological significance.

Why is it significant?

The log structures (ruins) at Francis Harritable's property south of Sebastian are of local historical and technological significance. The log structures are of historical significance (Criterion A), being constructed in the 1860s-70s by Spaniard Francis Harritable, an early settler in Sebastian who invested in the successful Frederick the Great Mine. Harritable acquired extensive land in the region, and also constructed the present Little Sebastian Hotel. The smaller log construction to the east of the site is believed to have been built as a dwelling by Harritable's son, Robert, and possibly dates to the 1890s. The Harritables were associated with the site for at least two generations from the 1860s to the early twentieth century. The association (Criterion H) of the log ruins with Francis Harritable is also of note. Harritable, a Spanish immigrant, was a prominent member of the local community. He oversaw the construction of the Little Sebastian Hotel (S01) and was also a member of the consortium which established the Fredrick the Great mine in 1864. The log structures (ruins), albeit in a depleted state, are comparatively rare (Criterion B) surviving log buildings in the Bendigo goldfields region. Log construction is believed to have been relatively common in the goldfields from the 1850s, although few are known to survive. Technologically (Criterion F), the log structures (ruins) at Francis Harritable's property are significant for demonstrating an approach to the use of a locally available resource (timber) in the construction of vernacular dwellings for storage and human habitation, in this case in the 1860s-70s (stores) and 1890s (dwelling). The surviving internal pugging, with mud and brick fragments, enhances the technological value of the structures.

Recommendations

Francis Harritable's log buildings are recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Greater Bendigo Heritage Overlay. The Overlay area is illustrated above, with the focus of significance on the log ruins. A reduced extent of Heritage Overlay could be considered, which captures the significant elements only, a curtilage around them of in the order of 10 metres, and the setback to Rothackers Road.

In preference, maintain the ruins in their existing condition, although 'benign neglect' may be a reasonable future outcome. In this situation, where the ruins will likely continue to deteriorate, it is recommended that the structures be photographically recorded. Ruinous structures, including those on sites with the potential to yield artefacts and other material remains relating to the historical use of the property, can also be considered for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI). The process of recommending a site for the VHI is typically undertaken by an archaeologist, who inspects the site and completes a 'Heritage Inventory Site Card' to be filed with Heritage Victoria. Details of the process are at, www.dpdc.vic.gov.au/heritage, 'Archaeology and Heritage Inventory'.

External Paint Colours	No
Internal Alterations Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions	No
Victorian Heritage Register	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated plan	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No

Identified By

Andrew Ward, 1998.

References

Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Crown Castleton, Bendigo, 2003.

F F Bailliere, *Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guides*, 1865 and 1879.

Ray Wallace, *Sydney Flat Gold to Woodvale Green*, Woodvale Progress Association, 1984.

Andrew Ward *et al*, *City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Study (Marong) Study Area, Stage 2*, 1998.

Specific:

¹ Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Crown Castleton, Bendigo, 2003, p. 299.

² Ray Wallace, *Sydney Flat Gold to Woodvale Green*, Woodvale Progress Association, 1984, p. 22.

³ Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Crown Castleton, Bendigo, 2003, p. 283.

⁴ *Vision and Realisation*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 1973, v. 2, p. 478.

⁵ F F Bailliere, in the *Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, 1865 (p. 334).

⁶ Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Crown Castleton, Bendigo, 2003, p. 299.

⁷ F F Bailliere, *Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, 1879, p. 421.

⁸ It has been suggested that the western log building was a stable (Ray Wallace, *Sydney Flat Gold to Woodvale Green*, Woodvale Progress Association, 1984, p. 22). However, the evidence of a former raised floor would appear to suggest that it was a store.

⁹ Ray Wallace, *Sydney Flat Gold to Woodvale Green*, Woodvale Progress Association, 1984, p. 22.

¹⁰ Ray Wallace, *Sydney Flat Gold to Woodvale Green*, Woodvale Progress Association, 1984, p. 22.

¹¹ Miles Lewis, 'Lock-Ups,' Section 2.02 of *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, viewed online at mileslewis.net, accessed 16 July 2010.

¹² William Howitt, *Land, Labour and Gold, or Two Years in Victoria*, Longman Brown, London, 1858, p. 377, cited in Miles Lewis, 'The Goldfields,' Section 2.02 of *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, viewed online at mileslewis.net, accessed 16 July 2010.

¹³ Ralph W Birrell and James A Lerk, *Bendigo's Gold Story*, Golden Square 2001, p. 59.

¹⁴ Marie Manning, *Back to Raywood and District*, Raywood and District Back To Committee, 1973, p.12.

¹⁵ Miles Lewis, 'Other Log Buildings,' Section 2.02 of *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, viewed online at mileslewis.net, accessed 16 July 2010.